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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 11, 2009

Summary: Reports that a local court "ordered the police to register a criminal case against former President Musharraf for detaining the judges and their families" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Tuesday. Prime Minister Gilani's visit to the Swat valley and his statement declaring that "terrorists were on the run" received front-page coverage. Interior Minister Malik's remarks that "Al Qaeda is trying to install a new 'chief terrorist' in the tribal areas" following the reported killing of militant leader Baitullah Mehsud received prominent display. A claim made by the banned outfit, Baloch Republic Army, that it had "killed 10 more kidnapped policemen in Balochistan" was also highlighted. Newspapers reported that U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke would visit Islamabad on 15th of this month.

Most major newspapers ran editorials on a variety of themes including former President Musharraf's prosecution, the drone attacks, the IMF loan, the fallouts of the Baitullah Mehsud's death, the India-Israel collusion. Commenting on the recent remarks of the Foreign Office spokesman about the India-Israel nexus, the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," noted that "now Pakistan has realized the conspiracies being hatched by its cunning enemies, it must divert the direction of its foreign policy from the U.S. to China." Toeing the line, the Lahore-based populist Urdu daily "Waqt" also advised that "it is necessary that Pakistan strengthen its ties with China and not let its soil be used against China." Whereas the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" claimed that "it is an undeniable fact that not only India and Israel have formed a nexus to destabilize Pakistan, but the United States is also patronizing them." End Summary.

News Stories

"Court Orders Police To Register Case Against Musharraf" "Dawn"
(08/11)

"A Sessions Court ordered the Islamabad Police on Monday to register a criminal case against former President Gen. (R) Pervez Musharraf for detaining superior court judges and their families in their houses after proclaiming the November 3, 2007, emergency."

"Terrorists Defeated, Gilani Declares In Swat" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said in Swat on Monday that terrorists were on the run and they would be eliminated soon. Pakistan's existence and sovereignty are above everything and we will never compromise on security and well-being of our people."

"Al Qaeda Can Install Its Own Man To Run TTP: Malik" "The News" (08/11)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has said the al-Qaeda could install its own man to run the banned organisation Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) with the consultation of those who were supplying weapons and funds to the Taliban, after Taliban leaders were killed in a shoot-out at their Shooraa meeting."

"'Chief Terrorist,' Top Aides Killed, Insists Govt.; Opposition Avoids Condemning Drone Attacks" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik insisted in the National Assembly on Monday that Pakistan's top Taliban commander Baitullah Mehsud was killed in a U.S. missile strike last week and one of his close aides in a subsequent power struggle, rejecting denials of their deaths, as the opposition refrained from criticizing Washington for a drone attack Islamabad believes eliminated its most wanted 'chief terrorist.'"

"Kidnappers Claim Killing Another 10 Policemen" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Militant (Baloch Republican Army) who had kidnapped police personnel and laborers on July 30 claimed on Monday to have killed another 10 policemen and thrown their bodies in Chattar area of Nasirabad district in Balochistan."

"Holbrooke Due On 15th" "The Nation," "Pakistan Observer," "The Post," "The News" (08/11)

"Special Representative of U.S. President Obama for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, will arrive here on 15th of this month on a three-day visit to discuss the anti-terrorism strategy and other issues of bilateral interest with Pakistani leadership.... The special American envoy, who is arriving here in the wake of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Chief Baitullah Mehsud's killing, would also discuss the latest situation in Waziristan with the Pakistani leaders, said an official in Islamabad on Monday requesting anonymity."

"TTP Confirms Mehsud Dead, Announces 15-Day Mourning" "Daily Times" (08/11)

"The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) confirmed on Monday that the group's chief, Baitullah Mehsud, had been killed in a U.S. drone strike on Wednesday, and announced a 15-day mourning period, reported a private TV channel. Newly-appointed TTP spokesman Azam Tariq told the channel the TTP would observe a ceasefire during mourning period. He said a successor to Baitullah had not been chosen yet."

"Hakeemullah Asks Govt. To Prove Baitullah Is Dead" "Dawn" (08/11)

"A top militant commander challenged the government on Monday to prove that Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan Chief Baitullah Mehsud was dead, insisting that he was alive and denying reports of a deadly shooting over succession. Hakeemullah Mehsud, a deputy of Baitullah, made the comments in telephone calls to foreign news agencies."

"Taliban Fight For Control Of Mehsud's Millions'" "The Nation" (08/11)

"Taliban commanders are engaged in a bloody succession contest for control of their late leader Baitullah Mehsud's 25 million pounds fortune, Pakistani security sources have claimed, reported Telegraph on Monday."

"Baitullah Killing Shows Closer Pak-U.S. Cooperation" "Daily Times" (08/11)

"The reported death of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan chief Baitullah Mehsud in a U.S. drone attack points to closer cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S. in the covert war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, according to analysts."

"U.S. Rejects Claim That Baitullah Is Still Alive" "Dawn" (08/11)

"U.S. National Security Adviser Gen. James Jones has rejected claims that Baitullah Mehsud is still alive. 'The Pakistani government believes that he is (dead), and all evidence that we have suggests that,' the general told 'Fox News.'"

"Eleven Militants Killed In N. Waziristan" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Security forces, backed by helicopter gunships and artillery, shelled hideouts of militants loyal to Hafiz Gul Bahadur after a military convoy was attacked in North Waziristan on Monday. According to officials, 11 militants were killed when troops launched a counter-attack and fired heavy artillery and mortars to dislodge the assailants from their positions."

"Four Die As Shell Hits House In Khyber; FC Camp Attacked" "The News" 908/11)

"Two women and two children were killed and nine others sustained injuries when a shell hit a house in Shalobar area of Bara, Khyber Agency, during fighting between security forces and the Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) activists on Monday."

"Two Soldiers Die In North Waziristan Agency (NWA) Blast" "The News" (08/11)

"Two soldiers of the Frontier Corps (FC) were killed and one sustained injuries when a bomb planted by suspected militants near the Banda check-post went off in North Waziristan Agency on Monday."

"Government Welcomes Dialogue Proposal For Troubled Areas" "Daily Times" (08/11)

"The government on Monday welcomed the Opposition's proposal to form an all-parties Jirga to restore peace through dialogue with peaceful elements of the militancy-hit areas."

"Afghanistan Closes Kabul Route For Kurram People" "Dawn" (08/11)

"The only road linking Kurram Agency with the outside world was closed after the Afghan government told tribesmen that they could not travel to Peshawar via Kabul because of the presidential election to be held there on August 20."

"Pakistan Holds Up N-Arms Control Talks" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Pakistan on Monday held up the resumption of nuclear arms control negotiations at the UN Conference on Disarmament as it asked to reopen a work plan already agreed on by the main nuclear powers. The Pakistan delegation, which on Friday asked for more time to consult with Islamabad, on Monday said it wanted fresh discussions on procedural questions in a draft text detailing the various heads of negotiating groups and the timetable for the talks."

"Talks On With U.S. For Civilian N-Deal: Aseff" "Dawn" (08/11)

"Planning Commission's Deputy Chairman Sardar Aseff Ahmed Ali has said the government is holding talks with the United States for a civilian nuclear deal similar to one the U.S. has reached with India."

"U.S. Garrison In The Garb Of Embassy Is Not Acceptable: Munawar Hassan, JI leader" "Express" (08/11)

"Munawar Hasan, the Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami has said that the establishment of the U.S. garrison in Islamabad in the garb of the expansion of the Embassy is not acceptable and the Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a demonstration in Islamabad on August 18 against the expansion of the U.S. Embassy, and the arrival of additional Marines. He said that the government should open eyes, or else, the U.S. would capture the Kahuta (Pakistan's prime nuclear facility)."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Foreign Office's Expression Of Facts," an editorial in the

second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/11)

"Pakistan [Foreign Office] has said that due to the Indo-U.S. civil nuclear deal India might expand its nuclear program. India-Israel collusion is a threat to regional peace... Now that Pakistan has realized the conspiracies being hatched by its cunning enemies, it must divert the direction of its foreign policy from the U.S. to China. Pakistan should pay full attention to improving its ties with China as it is only through Pak-China friendship that the balance of power can be restored in the region."

"India-Israel Collusion And Regional Stability," an editorial in Lahore-based populist Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 10,000) (08/11)

"It is not a secret that India cannot tolerate Pak-China friendship. Moreover, U.S. pressure regarding the Pak-Iran gas pipeline also shows that this project is under threat. Keeping Indian-Israeli-U.S. collusion in view, it is necessary that Pakistan strengthen its ties with China and not let its soil be used against China."

"U.S.-India-Israel Nexus - A Threat To Global Peace," an editorial note in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (08/11)

"The Foreign Office Spokesman Abdul Basit has recently said that the India-Israel nexus is a threat to this region, and that Pakistan is not in favor of presence of foreign troops in this part of the world for a long period of time.... It is an undeniable fact that not only India and Israel have formed a nexus to destabilize Pakistan, but the United States is also patronizing them. The task that U.S. has assigned to India in Afghanistan is intended to undermine Pakistan, to create problems for China, and to make India the 'Asian Tiger.'"

"Who Needs Drones?," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/11)

"Claim and counterclaim now swirl about in a confusing mix. None of the claims are verifiable; all are made by people who have a long track record of making unsubstantiated claims about any number of matters often with a desire to confuse and deceive. Whatever the truth of any of them - and there does seem to be an increasing body of anecdotal evidence that Baitullah Mehsud is indeed dead - it is clear that there is huge disarray among the ranks of the Taliban....

Whether Mehsud is alive or dead is practically immaterial, the reality is that the mere rumor of him being dead has provoked internal feuding and a power struggle for possession of the treasure that the Taliban have accumulated. This will play out over the coming days and weeks as a set of bloody encounters and yet more denial and rebuttal. Drones? Who needs 'em? Let the beast that is the Taliban consume itself."

"Amazing Discovery - A Question Mark On Performance Of Intelligence Agencies," an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (08/11)

"The reports about the clash among the different groups of Taliban following death of Baitullah Mehsud over the funds worth Rupees 2 billion and a huge cache of weapons established that Pakistani intelligence agencies were unaware of the network and financial sources of Taliban militants. It is a long-established truth that the anti-state individuals and groups always have their foreign sponsors one way or the other. Our open enemies and opponents in the garb of friends and allies want to deprive us of our independence, security and sovereignty. They are not ready to tolerate our very existence, and the disintegration of Pakistan is perhaps their foremost priority."

"Bravo Supreme Commander," an op-ed by Syed Wasif Arshad in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/11)

"Most of the independent sources confirm his (Baitullah Mehsud) killing. It is also being reported that there are signs of fissures in the Tehrik-i-Taliban camp. No one should now give them any opportunity to regroup and no group of this organisation be termed

as siding with the pro-Pakistani forces.... The guidance of the political leadership, the resolve of military management and the peoples' courage to fight this war provides an opportunity to weed out even the shrubbery of terrorism from not only the country but the entire region."

"Dense Smoke, Many Mirrors," an op-ed by Kamran Shafi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/11)

"We need Gen. James Jones, the U.S. President's National Security Adviser to tell us that Baitullah is dead? Given the attitudes they strike - referring to themselves as the nation's first line of defence; not caring a damn for the elected government's writ; and demanding special status for themselves such as their operatives not appearing in the highest court of the land - one must ask why they don't know. Indeed, having been at the receiving end of their silly (and very expensive!) shenanigans for decades now, ordinary Pakistanis must ask why it took so long for Baitullah to be hunted down and even then by the Americans, and why the other cold-blooded murderers aren't in custody/dead yet."

"Survey Reveals Pakistanis' Threat Perception," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (08/11)

"Contrary to general impression that India is being viewed as the biggest threat in Pakistan, a survey commissioned by Al-Jazeera and conducted by Gallup Pakistan, reveals that an overwhelming majority of Pakistanis consider U.S. as the main security threat.... The United States seems to be totally oblivious of its image problem and continues with the same berserk policies that create more resentment and hatred. It is an inherent problem with powers that are armed to teeth as they do not bother about public opinion and continue their headstrong policies even if they meant ultimate weakness of the entire system. President Barack Obama was known for his humane approach to all issues but unfortunately he too has not been able to make a break with the past. We would urge them to take into account the sensitivities of the public opinion in different countries and regions of the world and adjust American policies accordingly."

"Bracing For The Fallout," an op-ed by Malik Muhammad Ashraf in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/11)

"The only way that Afghanistan and Pakistan can see peace and an end to militancy and terrorism is U.S. and NATO forces leaving Afghanistan at the earliest possible and the initiation of a process of political reconciliation there in which all segments of the society, more so the Taliban also participate. If that happens in Afghanistan, only then we can hope an end to militancy within our borders allowing us an opportunity to heal the wounds and begin the process of reconciliation and reconstruction in our tribal areas and Swat. There being no signs of that happening in the near future, the Pakistani nation should therefore brace itself for the fallout of this unimaginable strategy in the form of a long period of instability, ever-growing problem of IDPs, militancy, religious extremism and acts of terrorism as reprisals for military action in Swat and the tribal region, particularly in South Waziristan."

"An Election In Afghanistan," an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/11)

"Polls could take place in most Afghan cities and in much of northern, central and western Afghanistan in relatively peaceful conditions. The Taliban are certainly stronger now and in a much better position to interfere with the polling process compared to the 2004 presidential election when they couldn't do much to obstruct the polls.... By describing the elections as a U.S.-orchestrated sham, the Taliban were hoping to discredit the process and question the legitimacy of the newly elected President. The Taliban declaration pointed out that up to 10,000 U.S., British and other NATO troops recently launched an operation in only one province, Helmand, to clear it of the militants and create stable conditions for holding the election there. It stressed that this showed that it was an 'American process of elections' and not a free and fair Afghan process as the polls were being held in presence of

western occupation forces."

"Iran's N-Talks," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (08/11)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that Washington has no illusions that Iran will accept overtures to return to negotiations about its nuclear program and will not wait much longer for Tehran to respond.... The West's concerns over Iran's nuclear program are understandable. However, the double standards employed by the international community on the issue needs to be taken up. The United States' uneven approach in dealing with the issue of nuclear proliferation in the region is amply reflected in its turning a blind eye to Israel's nuclear program and its belligerent posture vis-`-vis Iran.... As things stand, the energy-hungry United States' strategy in respect of the Middle East region, especially Iran, lends credence to the view that the United States' ultimate aim is to capture the oil and gas reserves of the area. President Obama should understand that if an attack on Iran takes place, it will not only be disastrous for the region, but the world at large."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Feierstein